



# *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Umbraculifera' Umbrella Black Locust<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

A fast-growing deciduous tree, Umbrella Black Locust grows to about 20 feet tall and wide (Fig. 1). The weeping, round habit forms a canopy much denser than the species casting dense shade below the tree. The 6 to 14-inch-long, dark green leaves, made up of multiple leaflets, are some of the last to appear in spring and often drop early in the autumn. Flowers irregularly with only a flower 'here and there' in the crown. The two to four-inch-long, dark red to black, leathery seeds pods which sometimes follow will persist on the trees throughout the winter.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Robinia pseudoacacia*  
'Umbraculifera'

**Pronunciation:** roe-BIN-nee-uh  
soo-doe-uh-KAY-shuh

**Common name(s):** Umbrella Black Locust, Umbrella  
Common Locust

**Family:** *Leguminosae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 8 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Uses:** shade tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small  
number of nurseries

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 15 to 20 feet

**Spread:** 20 to 25 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a  
regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more

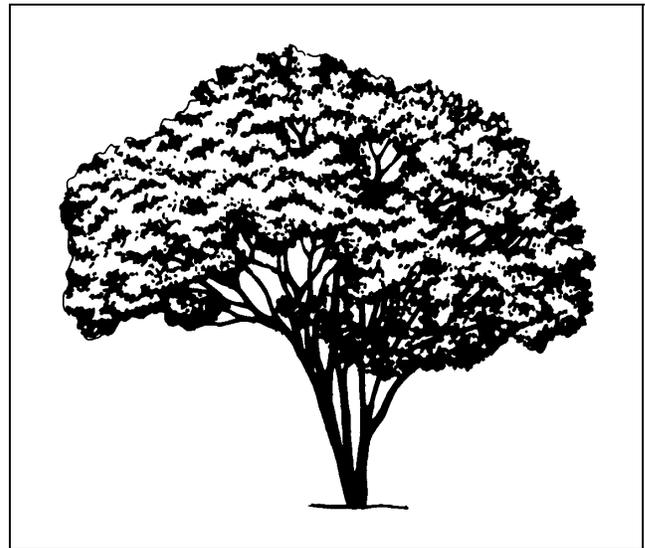


Figure 1. Mature Umbrella Black Locust.

or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** round; weeping

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** odd pinnately compound

**Leaflet margin:** entire

**Leaflet shape:** elliptic (oval); oblong; obovate

**Leaflet venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaflet blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-573, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** no flowers

**Flower characteristics:** no flowers

### Fruit

There is no fruit on this tree.

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

**Current year twig color:** brown

**Current year twig thickness:** thin

**Wood specific gravity:** 0.69

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerance:** good

### Other

**Roots:** surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

**Winter interest:** tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

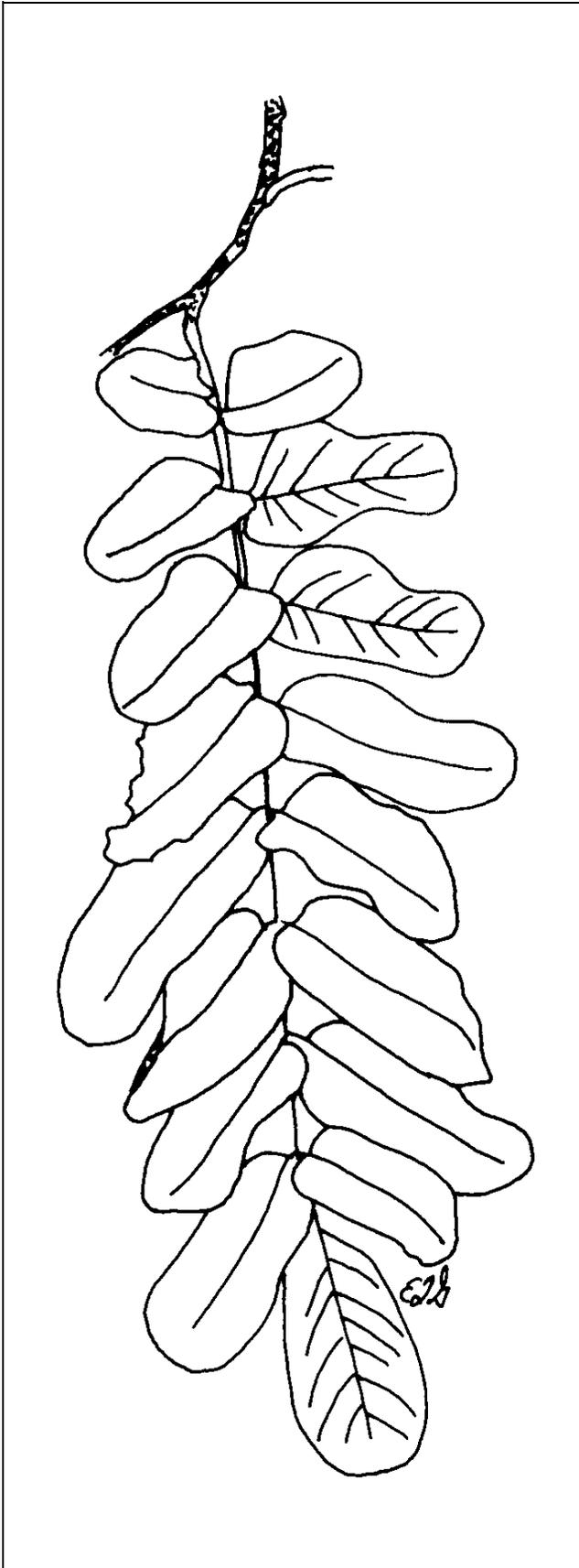


Figure 3. Foliage of Umbrella Black Locust.

The tree is best used as a specimen for an outstanding ornamental effect. Plant on 20 to 30-foot-centers along an entrance road or along highway medians. This should be a very adaptable, pretty tree for urban plantings, but is usually not grown by nursery operators. The root suckering and invasive root system allows the species to quickly spread into surrounding landscapes. This feature should be considered when placing Black Locust in the ornamental garden, although the cultivar may not sucker as much.

Although the wood of Black Locust is reputed to be extremely strong and durable (pioneers used it to fashion nails for building ships and houses), the branches are brittle and subject to damage in high winds. This may be due largely to the tendency for the branches to form a narrow angle with the trunk and to grow aggressively relative to the trunk. This can be partially corrected by pruning the major branches so they grow to no more than about half the size of the trunk. Try to space the major branches along the trunk as best you can to develop a strong tree which will stay together. This will be difficult since the tree is usually purchased with the major branches well developed and most of them originate from one point on the trunk.

Able to tolerate drought, salt, and poor soil, Black Locust will grow in full sun or partial shade on almost any soil except that which is permanently wet. The species is a tough tree which will grow on the toughest sites, and there is no reason to believe this cultivar will respond differently.

### Pests

Locust borer is a serious pest although borer-resistant clones are now being developed. Also bothered by carpenterworm, locust leaf miner, and scales. Leaf miner is a universal problem on the species, and the trees along the highways in the south can be seen in summer riddled with damage from this pest.

### Diseases

This tree is susceptible to canker, leaf spot, and powdery mildew.

## USE AND MANAGEMENT